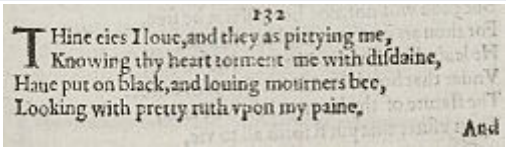
Early Modern English

Early Modern English, **Early New English** (sometimes abbreviated to **EModE**,[1] **EMnE** or **EME**) is the stage of the English language from the beginning of the Tudor period to the English Interregnum and Restoration, or from the transition from Middle English, in the late 15th century, to the transition to Modern English, in the mid-to-late 17th century.[2]

Before and after the accession of James I to the English throne in 1603, the emerging English standard began to influence the spoken and written Middle Scots of Scotland.

The grammatical and orthographical conventions of literary English in the late 16th century and in the 17th century are still very influential on Modern Standard English. Most modern readers of English can understand texts written in the late phase of the Early Modern English, such as the King James Bible and the works of William Shakespeare, and they have greatly influenced Modern English.

Texts from the earlier phase of Middle English, such as the late-15th century *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485) and the mid-16th century *Gorboduc* (1561), may present more difficulties but are still obviously closer to Modern English grammar, lexicon and phonology than are 14th-century Middle English texts, such as the works of Geoffrey Chaucer.

Early Modern English	
Shakespeare's English, King James English	
English	
 132 THine eies I loue, and they as pitying me, Knowing thy heart torment me with disdaine, Haue put on black, and louing mourners bee, Looking with pretty ruth vpon my paine, And William Shakespeare's Sonnet 132 in the 1609 Quarto	
Region	England, southern Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British colonies
Era	developed into Modern English in late 17th century
Language family	Indo-European ▪ Germanic ▪ West Germanic ▪ North Sea Germanic ▪ Anglo-Frisian ▪ Anglic ▪ **Early Modern English**
Early forms	Old English ▪ Middle English
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	–
ISO 639-6	emen
Glottolog	*None*
IETF	en-emodeng

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Transition from Middle English

The change from Middle English to Early Modern English was not just a matter of changes of vocabulary or pronunciation; a new era in the history of English was beginning.

An era of linguistic change in a language with large variations in dialect was replaced by a new era of a more standardised language, with a richer lexicon and an established (and lasting) literature.

- 1476 – William Caxton starts printing in Westminster; however, the language that he uses reflects the variety of styles and dialects used by the authors who originally wrote the material.

Tudor period (1485–1603)

- 1485 – Caxton publishes Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, the first print bestseller in English. Malory's language, while archaic in some respects, is clearly Early Modern and is possibly a Yorkshire or Midlands dialect.
- 1491 or 1492 – Richard Pynson starts printing in London; his style tends to prefer Chancery Standard, the form of English used by the government.

Henry VIII

- c. 1509 – Pynson becomes the King's official printer.
- From 1525 – Publication of William Tyndale's Bible translation, which was initially banned.
- 1539 – Publication of the *Great Bible*, the first officially-authorised Bible in English. Edited by Myles Coverdale, it is largely from the work of Tyndale. It is read to congregations regularly in churches, which familiarises much of the population of England with a standard form of the language.
- 1549 – Publication of the first *Book of Common Prayer* in English, under the supervision of Thomas Cranmer (revised 1552 and 1662), which standardises much of the wording of church services. Some have argued that since attendance at prayer book services was required by law for many years, the repetitive use of its language helped to standardise Modern English even more than the *King James Bible* (1611) did.[3]
- 1557 – Publication of *Tottel's Miscellany*.

Elizabethan English

Elizabethan era (1558–1603)

- 1582 – The Rheims and Douai Bible is completed, and the New Testament is released in Rheims, France, in 1582. It is the first complete English translation of the Bible that is officially sponsored and carried out by the Catholic Church (earlier translations into English, especially of the Psalms and Gospels existed as far back as the 9th century, but it is the first Catholic English translation of the full Bible). Though the Old Testament is ready complete, it is not published until 1609–1610, when it is released in two volumes. It does not make a large impact on the English language at large, it certainly plays a role in the development of English, especially in the world's heavily-Catholic English-speaking areas.
- Christopher Marlowe, fl. 1586–1593

- 1592 – *The Spanish Tragedy* by Thomas Kyd
- c. 1590 to c. 1612 – Shakespeare's plays written.

17th century

Jacobean and Caroline eras

Jacobean era (1603–1625)

- 1609 – Shakespeare's sonnets published
- Other playwrights:
  - Ben Jonson
  - Thomas Dekker
  - Beaumont and Fletcher (Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher)
  - John Webster
- 1607 – The first successful permanent English colony in the New World, Jamestown, is established in Virginia. Early vocabulary specific to American English comes from indigenous languages (such as moose, racoon).
- 1611 – The *King James Bible* is published, largely based on Tyndale's translation. It remains the standard Bible in the Church of England for many years.
- 1623 – Shakespeare's *First Folio* published

THE
TRAGEDIE OF GORBODVC,
whereof three Actes were wrytten by
Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by
Thomas Sackuyle.
Sett forthe as the same was shewed before the
QVENES most excellent Maiestie, in her highnes
Court of Whitehall, the .xviii. day of January,
Anno Domini. 1561. By the Gentlemen
of Thynner Temple in London.
IMPRYNTED AT LONDON
in Fletestrete, at the Signe of the
Faucon by William Griffith: And are
to be sold at his Shop in Saincte
Dunstones Churchyarde in
the West of London.
Anno. 1565. Septemb. xx.

Title page of *Gorboduc* (printed 1565). *The Tragedie of Gorbodvc, whereof three Actes were wrytten by Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by Thomas Sackuyle. Sett forthe as the same was shewed before the Qvenes most excellent Maiestie, in her highnes Court of Whitehall, the .xviii. day of January, Anno Domini .1561. By the Gentlemen of Thynner Temple in London.*

Caroline era and English Civil War (1625–1649)

- 1630–1651 – William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Colony, writes in his journal. It will become *Of Plymouth Plantation*, one of the earliest texts written in the American Colonies
- 1647 – Publication of the first Beaumont and Fletcher folio

Interregnum and Restoration

The English Civil War and the Interregnum were times of social and political upheaval and instability. The dates for Restoration literature are a matter of convention and differ markedly from genre to genre. In drama, the "Restoration" may last until 1700, but in poetry, it may last only until 1666, the *annus mirabilis* (year of wonders), and prose, it last until 1688, with the increasing tensions over succession and the corresponding rise in journalism and periodicals, or until 1700, when those periodicals grew more stabilised.

- 1651 – Publication of *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes.
- 1660–1669 – Samuel Pepys writes in his diary, which will become an important eyewitness account of the Restoration Era.
- 1662 – New edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, largely based on the 1549 and subsequent editions, which long remains a standard work in English.
- 1667 – Publication of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and of *Annus Mirabilis* by John Dryden.

Development to Modern English

The 17th-century port towns and their forms of speech gain influence over the old county towns. From around the 1690s onwards, England experienced a new period of internal peace and relative stability, which encouraged the arts including literature.

Modern English can be taken to have emerged fully by the beginning of the Georgian era in 1714, but English orthography remained somewhat fluid until the publication of Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, in 1755.

The towering importance of William Shakespeare over the other Elizabethan authors was the result of his reception during the 17th and the 18th centuries, which directly contributes to the development of Standard English. Shakespeare's plays are therefore still familiar and comprehensible 400 years after they were written,[4] but the works of Geoffrey Chaucer and William Langland, which had been written only 200 years earlier, are considerably more difficult for the average modern reader.

Orthography

The orthography of Early Modern English was fairly similar to that of today, but spelling was unstable. Early Modern English, as well as Modern English, inherited orthographical conventions predating the Great Vowel Shift.

Shakespeare's writings are universally associated with Early Modern English

Early Modern English spelling was similar to that of Middle English. Certain changes were made, however, sometimes for reasons of etymology (as with the silent ⟨b⟩ that was added to words like *debt*, *doubt* and *subtle*).

Early Modern English orthography had a number of features of spelling that have not been retained:

- The letter ⟨S⟩ had two distinct lowercase forms: ⟨s⟩ (short *s*), as is still used today, and ⟨ſ⟩ (long s). The short *s* was always used at the end of a word and often elsewhere. The long *s*, if used, could appear anywhere except at the end of a word. The double lowercase *S* was written variously ⟨ſſ⟩, ⟨ſs⟩ or ⟨ß⟩ (the last ligature is still used in German ß).[5] That is similar to the alternation between medial (σ) and final lower case sigma (ς) in Greek.
- ⟨u⟩ and ⟨v⟩ were then considered as not two distinct letters but as still different forms of the same letter. Typographically, ⟨v⟩ was frequent at the start of a word and ⟨u⟩ elsewhere;[6] hence *vnmoued* (for modern *unmoved*) and *loue* (for *love*). The modern convention of using ⟨u⟩ for the vowel sound(s) and ⟨v⟩ for the consonant appears to have been introduced in the 1630s.[7] Also, ⟨w⟩ was frequently represented by ⟨vv⟩.
- Similarly, ⟨i⟩ and ⟨j⟩ were also still considered not as two distinct letters, but as different forms of the same letter: hence *ioy* for *joy* and *iust* for *just*. Again, the custom of using ⟨i⟩ as a vowel and ⟨j⟩ as a consonant began in the 1630s.[7]
- The letter ⟨þ⟩ (thorn) was still in use during the Early Modern English period but was increasingly limited to handwritten texts. In Early Modern English printing, ⟨þ⟩ was represented by the Latin ⟨Y⟩ (see Ye olde), which appeared similar to thorn in blackletter typeface (⟨𝔜⟩). Thorn had become nearly totally disused by the late Early Modern English period, the last vestiges of the letter being its ligatures, y^{e} (thee), y^{t} (that), y^{u} (thou), which were still seen occasionally in the 1611 King James Bible and in Shakespeare's Folios.[8]
- A silent ⟨e⟩ was often appended to words, as in *speake* and *cowarde*. The last consonant was sometimes doubled when the ⟨e⟩ was added: hence *manne* (for *man*) and *runne* (for *run*).
- The sound /ʌ/ was often written ⟨o⟩ (as in *son*): hence *lommer*, *plombe* (for modern *summer*, *plumb*).[9]
- The final syllable of words like *public* was variously spelt but came to be standardised as *-ick*. The modern spellings with *-ic* did not come into use until the mid-18th century.[10]

Many spellings had still not been standardised, however. For example, *he* was spelled as both *he* and *hee* in the same sentence in Shakespeare's plays and elsewhere.

Phonology

Consonants

Most consonant sounds of Early Modern English have survived into present-day English; however, there are still a few notable differences in pronunciation:

- Today's "silent" consonants found in the consonant clusters of such words as *knot, gnat, sword* were still fully pronounced up until the mid-to-late 16th century and thus presumably by Shakespeare, though they were fully reduced by the early 17th century.[11] The digraph <ght>, in words like *night*, *thought*, and *daughter*, originally

pronounced [xt] in much older English, was probably reduced to simply [t] (as it is today) or at least heavily reduced in sound to something like [ht], [çt], or [ft]. It seems likely that much variation existed for many of these words.

- The now-silent *l* of *would* and *should* may have persisted in being pronounced as late as 1700 in Britain and perhaps several decades longer in the British American colonies.[12]
- The modern phoneme /ʒ/ was not documented as occurring until the second half of the 17th century. Likely, that phoneme in a word like *vision* was pronounced as /zi/ and in *measure* as /z/.
- Most words with the spelling ⟨wh⟩, such as *what, where,* and *whale,* were still pronounced [ʍ] (listen), rather than [w] (listen). That means, for example, that *wine* and *whine* were still pronounced differently, unlike in most varieties of English today.[13]
- Early Modern English was rhotic. In other words, the *r* was always pronounced,[13] but the precise nature of the typical rhotic consonant remains unclear. It was, however, certainly one of the following:
  - The "R" of most varieties of English today: [ɹ] (listen)
  - The "trilled or rolled R": [r] (listen)
  - The "retroflex R": [ɻ] (listen).
- In Early Modern English, the precise nature of the light and dark variants of the *l* consonant, respectively [l] (listen) and [ɬ] (listen), remains unclear.
- Word-final ⟨ng⟩, as in *sing*, was still pronounced /ŋg/ until the late 16th century when it began to coalesce into the usual modern pronunciation, [ŋ].
- H-dropping at the start of words was common, as it still is in informal English throughout most of England.[13]

Pure vowels and diphthongs

The following information primarily comes from studies of the Great Vowel Shift;[14][15] see the related chart.

- The modern English phoneme /aɪ/ (listen), as in *glide, rhyme,* and *eye*, was [əi] and later [əi]. Early Modern rhymes indicate that [əi] was also the vowel that was used at the end of words like *happy*, *melody* and *busy*.
- /aʊ/ (listen), as in *now*, *out* and *ploughed*, was [əu ~ əʊ] (listen).
- /æ/ (listen), as in *cab*, *trap* and *sad*, was more or less the same as the phoneme represents today
- /ɛ/ (listen), as in *fed, elm,* and *hen*, was more or less the same as the phoneme represents today or perhaps a slightly higher [ɛ̝] (listen), sometimes approaching [ɪ] (listen) (as it still retains in the word *pretty*).[13]
- /eɪ/ (listen), as in *name*, *case* and *sake*, was a long monophthong, approximating [ɛː] (listen), perhaps at first more open, such as /æ/ (listen) (with Shakespeare rhyming words like *haste*, *taste* and *waste* with a fronted *last* and *shade* with *sad*),[16] and later less open, such as [ɛ̝ː] (listen). The phoneme was just beginning or already in the process of merging with the phoneme [ɛːi] (listen) as in *day*, *pay,* and *say*. Depending upon the exact moment or dialect of Early Modern English, *met* was a potential homophone with *mate*; the same was true for even *mat* and *mate*. Such an open pronunciation remains in some dialects, notably in Scotland, Northern England, and perhaps Ireland.
- /iː/ (listen) (typically spelled ⟨ee⟩ or ⟨ie⟩) as in *see*, *bee* and *meet*, was more or less the same as the phoneme represents today, but it had not yet merged with the phoneme represented by the spellings ⟨ea⟩ or ⟨ei⟩ (and perhaps ⟨ie⟩, particularly with *fiend*, *field* and *friend*), as in *east*, *meal* and *feat*, which were pronounced with [eː] (listen) or [ɛ̝ː].[17][16] However, words like *breath*, *dead* and *head* may have already split off towards /ɛ/ (listen)).
- /ɪ/ (listen), as in *bib*, *pin* and *thick*, was more or less the same as the phoneme represents today
- /oʊ/ (listen), as in *stone*, *bode* and *yolk*, was [oː] (listen) or [o̝ː] (listen). The phoneme was probably just beginning the process of merging with the phoneme [ou], as in *grow*, *know* and *mow*, without yet achieving today's complete merger. The old pronunciation remains in some dialects, such as in Yorkshire and Scotland.
- /ɒ/ (listen), as in *rod*, *top* and *pot*, was [ɒ] or [ɔ] (listen).
- /ɔː/ (listen), as in *taut*, *taught* and *law*, was [ɔː] or [ɑː] (listen).
- /ɔɪ/ (listen), as in *boy*, *choice* and *toy*, is even less clear than other vowels. By the late-16th century, the similar but distinct phonemes /ɔɪ/, /ʊi/ and /əɪ/ all existed. By the late-17th century only /ɔɪ/ remained.[18] Because those phonemes were in such a state of flux during the whole Early Modern period (with evidence of rhyming occurring among them as well as with the precursor to /aɪ/), scholars[11] often assume only the most neutral possibility for the pronunciation of /ɔɪ/ as well as its similar phonemes in Early Modern English: [əɪ] (which, if accurate, would constitute an early instance of the line–loin merger since /aɪ/ had not yet fully developed in English).
- /ʌ/ (listen) (as in *drum*, *enough* and *love*) and /ʊ/ (listen) (as in *could*, *full*, *put*) had not yet split and so were both pronounced in the vicinity of [ɤ] (listen).
- /uː/ (listen) was about the same as the phoneme represents today but occurred in not only words like *food*, *moon* and *stool* but also all other words spelled with ⟨oo⟩ like *blood*, *cook* and *foot*. The nature of the vowel sound in the latter group of words, however, is further complicated by the fact that the vowel for some of those words was shortened: either beginning or already in the process of approximating the Early Modern English [ʊ̟] (listen) and later [ʊ] (listen). For instance, at certain stages of the Early Modern period or in certain dialects (or both), *loom* and

come rhymed; this is certainly true in Shakespeare's writing. That phonological split among the ⟨oo⟩ words was a catalyst for the later foot–strut split and is called "early shortening" by John C. Wells.[19] The ⟨oo⟩ words that were pronounced as something like [ʊ] (listen) seem to have included *blood*, *brood*, *doom*, *good* and *noon*.[20]

- /ɪʊ̯/ or /iu̯/ occurred in words spelled with *ew* or *ue* such as *due* and *dew*. In most dialects of Modern English, it became /juː/ and /uː/ by yod-dropping and so *do*, *dew* and *due* are now perfect homophones. A distinction between the two phonemes remains in Wales and in other conservative dialects.

Rhotic vowels

It is clear that the *r* sound (the phoneme /r/) was probably always pronounced with following vowel sounds (more in the style of today's Western English, Norfolk, Northern English, Irish or Scottish accents, and less like today's typical London or Received Pronunciation). Furthermore, /ɛ/, /ɪ/ and /ʌ/ were not necessarily merged before /r/, as they are in most modern English dialects. The stressed modern phoneme /ɜː/, when it is spelled ⟨er⟩, ⟨ear⟩ and perhaps ⟨or⟩ (as in *clerk*, *earth*, or *divert*), had a vowel sound with an *a*-like quality, perhaps about [ɐɹ] or [äɹ].[16] With the spelling ⟨or⟩, the sound may have been backed, more toward [ɒɹ] in words like *worth* and *word*.[16] In some pronunciations, words like *fair* and *fear*, with the spellings ⟨air⟩ and ⟨ear⟩, rhymed with each other, and words with the spelling ⟨are⟩, such as *prepare* and *compare*, were sometimes pronounced with a more open vowel sound, like the verbs *are* and *scar*. See Great Vowel Shift § Later mergers for more information.

Particular words

Nature was pronounced approximately as ['nɛːtəɹ][13] and may have ryhmed with *letter* or, early on, even *latter*. *One* may have merged to the sound of *own*, with both *one* and *other* using the era's long GOAT vowel, rather than today's STRUT vowels.[13] *Tongue* merged to the sound of *tong* and rhymed with *song*.[16]

Grammar

Pronouns

Early Modern English had two second-person personal pronouns: *thou*, the informal singular pronoun, and *ye*, the plural (both formal and informal) pronoun and the formal singular pronoun.

"Thou and "ye" were both common in the early-16th century (they can be seen, for example, in the disputes over Tyndale's translation of the Bible in the 1520s and the 1530s) but by 1650, "thou" seems old-fashioned or literary. It has effectively completely disappeared from Modern Standard English but is still in use in some situations. In many churches in the United Kingdom and the United States, primarily those that use the King James Bible, "thou" is still used to address God in prayer and is felt to denote reverence. "Thou" also remains in regular use in particular regional English dialects, but its pronunciation is often reduced to "tha".

The translators of the King James Bible of the Bible (begun 1604 and published 1611, while Shakespeare was at the height of his popularity) had a particular reason for keeping the "thou/thee/thy/thine" forms that were slowly beginning to fall out of spoken use, as it enabled them to match the Hebrew and Ancient Greek distinction between second person singular ("thou") and plural ("ye"). It was not to denote reverence (in the King James Bible, God addresses individual people and even Satan as "thou") but only to denote the singular. Over the centuries, however, the very fact that "thou" was dropping out of normal use gave it a special aura and so it gradually came to be used to express reverence in hymns and in prayers.

Like other personal pronouns, *thou* and *ye* have different forms dependent on their grammatical case; specifically, the objective form of *thou* is *thee*, its possessive forms are *thy* and *thine*, and its reflexive or emphatic form is *thyself*.

The objective form of *ye* was *you*, its possessive forms are *your* and *yours* and its reflexive or emphatic forms are *yourself* and *yourselves*.

My and *thy* become *mine* and *thine* before words beginning with a vowel or an *h*. More accurately, the older forms "mine" and "thine" had become "my" and "thy" before words beginning with a consonant other than *h*, and "mine" and "thine" were retained before words beginning with a vowel or an *h*, as in *mine eyes* or *thine hand*.

Christ aboue To the Hebrewes. the Angels.

THE EPISTLE OF PAVL
the Apostle to the Hebrewes.

CHAP. I.

Beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the 1611 King James Bible. *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, Hath in these last dayes spoken unto us by his Sonne, whom he hath appointed heire of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightnesse of his glory and the expresse image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when hee had by himselfe purged our sinnes, sate down onye right hand of the Maiestie on high, Being made so much better then the Angels, as hee hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name then they*

Personal pronouns in Early Modern English

		Nominative	Oblique	Genitive	Possessive
1st person	**singular**	I	me	my/mine[# 1]	mine
	plural	we	us	our	ours
2nd person	**singular informal**	thou	thee	thy/thine[# 1]	thine
	plural or formal singular	ye, you	you	your	yours
3rd person	**singular**	he/she/it	him/her/it	his/her/his (it)[# 2]	his/hers/his[# 2]
	plural	they	them	their	theirs

1. The genitives *my*, *mine*, *thy*, and *thine* are used as possessive adjectives before a noun, or as possessive pronouns without a noun. All four forms are used as possessive adjectives: *mine* and *thine* are used before nouns beginning in a vowel sound, or before nouns beginning in the letter *h*, which was usually silent (e.g. *thine eyes* and *mine heart*, which was pronounced as *mine art*) and *my* and *thy* before consonants (*thy mother*, *my love*). However, only *mine* and *thine* are used as possessive pronouns, as in *it is thine* and *they were mine* (not **they were my*).
2. From the early Early Modern English period up until the 17th century *his* was the possessive of the third-person neuter *it* as well as of the third-person masculine *he*. Genitive "it" appears once in the 1611 King James Bible

(Leviticus 25:5) as *groweth of it owne accord*

Verbs

Tense and number

During the Early Modern period, the verb inflections became simplified as they evolved towards their modern forms:

- The third-person singular present lost its alternate inflections *-(e)th* became obsolete, and *-s* survived. (Both forms can be seen together in Shakespeare: "With her that *hateth* thee and *hates* us all").[21]
- The plural present form became uninflected. Present plurals had been marked with *-en* and singulars with *-th* or *-s* (*-th* and *-s* survived the longest, especially with the singular use of *is*, *hath* and *doth*).[22] Marked present plurals were rare throughout the Early Modern period and *-en* was probably used only as a stylistic affectation to indicate rural or old-fashioned speech.[23]
- The second-person singular indicative was marked in both the present and past tenses with *-st* or *-est* (for example, in the past tense, *walkedst* or *gav'st*).[24] Since the indicative past was not and still is not otherwise marked for person or number,[25] the loss of *thou* made the past subjunctive indistinguishable from the indicative past for all verbs except *to be*.

Modal auxiliaries

The modal auxiliaries cemented their distinctive syntactical characteristics during the Early Modern period. Thus, the use of modals without an infinitive became rare (as in "I must to Coventry"; "I'll none of that"). The use of modals' present participles to indicate aspect (as in "Maeyinge suffer no more the loue & deathe of Aurelio" from 1556), and of their preterite forms to indicate tense (as in "he follow'd Horace so very close, that of necessity he must fall with him") also became uncommon.[26]

Some verbs ceased to function as modals during the Early Modern period. The present form of *wont, mot*, became obsolete. *Dare* also lost the syntactical characteristics of a modal auxiliary and evolved a new past form (*dared*), distinct from the modal *durst*.[27]

Perfect and progressive forms

The perfect of the verbs had not yet been standardised to use only the auxiliary verb "to have". Some took as their auxiliary verb "to be", such as this example from the King James Bible: "But which of you... will say unto him... when he **is** come from the field, Go and sit down..." [Luke XVII:7]. The rules for the auxiliaries for different verbs were similar to those that are still observed in German and French (see unaccusative verb).

The modern syntax used for the progressive aspect ("I am walking") became dominant by the end of the Early Modern period, but other forms were also common such as the prefix *a-* ("I am a-walking") and the infinitive paired with "do" ("I do walk"). Moreover, the *to be* + *-ing* verb form could be used to express a passive meaning without any additional markers: "The house is building" could mean "The house is being built".[28]

Vocabulary

A number of words that are still in common use in Modern English have undergone semantic narrowing.

The use of the verb "to suffer" in the sense of "to allow" survived into Early Modern English, as in the phrase "suffer the little children" of the King James Bible, but it has mostly been lost in Modern English[29].

Also, this period reveals a curious case of one of the earliest Russian borrowings to English (which is historically a rare occasion itself, either research sources are yet scarce[30]), in example - at least as early as year 1600, the word "steppe" (rus. степь)[31], that has first appeared in English in William Shakespeare's comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream". It is believed that this is a possible indirect borrowing via either German or French.

See also

- Early modern Britain
- Early Modern English literature
- History of the English language
- Inkhorn debate
- Elizabethan era, Jacobean era, Caroline era
- English Renaissance
- Shakespeare's influence
- Middle English, Modern English, Old English

References

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